THE NEW INDIAN EXPRESS

BENGALURU • THURSDAY • JULY 24, 2025 • ₹9.00 • PAGES 20 • LATE CITY EDITION

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ICJ: COUNTRIES HARMED BY CLIMATE CHANGE ENTITLED TO REPARATIONS

The International Court of Justice said affected countries can claim reparations but what they are owed could be determined on a case-by-case basis

U.N. COURT'S LEGAL OPINION, BUT NON-BINDING

In its first ever opinion on climate change, the ICJ said the consequences of climate change are far-reaching as they affect both natural ecosystems and human populations. "These consequences underscore the urgent and existential threat posed by climate change," said judge Yuji Iwasawa while reading out the opinion, which is advisory in nature and non-binding | **P12**

FAILURE TO PROTECT PLANET A WRONGFUL ACT

- "Failure of a state to take appropriate action to protect the climate system... may constitute an internationally wrongful act," he added
- After years of efforts by vulnerable island nations who fear they could disappear under rising sea waters, the UN General Assembly asked the top UN court in 2023 for an advisory opinion on climate change

130

COUNTRIES BACKED THE CASE, BROUGHT BY THE PACIFIC ISLAND NATION OF VANUATU

CHENNAI ▪ MADURAI ▪ VIJAYAWADA ▪ BENGALURU ▪ KOCHI ▪ HYDERABAD ▪ VISAKHAPATNAM ▪ COIMBATORE ▪ KOZHIKODE ▪ THIRUVANANTHAPURAM ▪ BELAGAVI ▪ BHUBANESWAR ▪ SHIVAMOGGA ▪ MANGALURU ▪ TIRUPATI ▪ TIRUCHY ▪ TIRUNELVELI ▪ SAMBALPUR ▪ HUBBALLI ▪ DHARMAPURI ▪ KOTTAYAM ▪ KANNUR ▪ VILLUPURAM ▪ KOLLAM ▪ TADEPALLIGUDEM ▪ NAGAPATTINAM ▪ THRISSUR ▪ KALABURAGI

Shah sets Justice Varma impeachment ball rolling

Meets Birla, Harivansh; Speaker to set up statutory probe committee

PREETHA NAIR @ New Delhi

DAYS after the abrupt resignation of Vice President Jagdeep Dhankhar, the government set the ball rolling for the impeachment of Allahabad High Court judge Yashwant Varma with Union minister Amit Shah holding high level meetings with Lok Sabha Speaker Om Birla and Rajya Sabha deputy chairman Harivansh Narayan Singh on Wednesday.

Sources said while Birla and Harivansh held a meeting at Parliament to discuss the proceedings, Shah met them later.

According to people familiar with the development, the Lok Sabha Speaker may now initiate the process to set up a statutory committee to examine the charges of corruption levelled against the judge. The committee comprising a senior judge of the Supreme Court, a sitting chief justice of a high court and a distinguished jurist will then probe the charges against him and submit its report in three months.

If the committee finds him guilty, the inquiry report will be tabled in Parliament, followed by a discussion in both Houses after which there will be voting on the motion for the removal of the judge.

LS Speaker Om Birla and RS deputy chairman Harivansh Narayan Singh

RS notice now active

"A notice was given in RS on Justice Verma which he acknowledged and almost admitted it. When the chair has pronounced his ruling that it has fulfilled the stipulated requirement, it's an order," an RS member said

The meeting of the presiding officers assumes significance as the impeachment process of Justice Varma reportedly led to the resignation of Dhankhar. Though there was no official word on the reason behind his exit, sources say it is linked to Dhankhar's acceptance of a notice sponsored by the Opposition in the Rajya Sabha, which went against the government's plan to lead the offensive.

While a total of 145 Lok Sabha and 63 Rajya Sabha MPs submitted notices to the presiding officers for the removal of Varma on Monday, Dhankhar took cognisance of the Opposition notice and made a statement in the Rajya Sabha.

Speaking to this newspaper, a senior Rajya Sabha MP said that the notice is active as the Chairman has pronounced it as an order.

In his statement in the Rajya Sabha on Monday, Dhankhar said, "I direct the secretary general to find out whether a similar motion has been moved in Lok Sabha... If the motion is presented in the two houses on different dates, then the motion which is presented in the House first, that alone is taken into consideration and the second motion gets non-jurisdictional," he said, citing the Judges (Inquiry) Act, 1968.

Now, tourist visa for Chinese nationals

JAYANTH JACOB @ New Delhi

INDIA will resume issuing tourist visas to Chinese nationals from July 24, in a significant move aimed at normalising strained ties following the deadly 2020 border clashes. The Indian Embassy in Beijing confirmed the decision on Wednesday, marking the first time in five years that Chinese tourists can apply for Indian visas.

The embassy announced that Chinese citizens may now submit applications online and visit Indian Visa Application Centres in Beijing, Shanghai and Guangzhou with the required documents.

Tourist visas were suspended in 2020 amid the Covid-19 pandemic, but the freeze remained in place due to ongoing tensions along the eastern Ladakh border.

DECISION AFTER JAISHANKAR'S VISIT

The decision to lift the curbs came after foreign minister S Jaishankar visited China on July 14–15, where he held talks with his Chinese counterpart Wang Yi and Vice President Han Zheng

The resumption of tourist visas is part of a broader series of confidence-building measures between the two countries. Last month, India and China also resumed the Kailash Manasarovar Yatra after a five-year gap. The thaw began late last year, after Indian and Chinese troops disengaged at key friction points along the Line of Actual Control (LAC), paving the way for diplomatic re-engagement.

China welcomed India's visa announcement. "It is a positive move," said Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesperson Guo Jiakun. "Making cross-border travel easier serves the interests of all parties. China stands ready to maintain communication and coordination with India to keep facilitating people-to-people exchanges between the two countries."

Tourist visas for Indian nationals remained suspended until March, when both sides agreed to restore direct air connectivity. After a meeting between a meeting between Prime Minister Narendra Modi and President Xi Jinping in Russia last October, ties have steadily improved, marked by high-level engagements and confidence building measures.

15-DAY EXERCISE

STATE TO CONDUCT SOCIAL, EDU SURVEY FROM SEPT 22

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
@ Bengaluru

THE state government has decided to conduct the Social and Educational Survey for 15 days from September 22.

Chief Minister Siddaramaiah announced here on Wednesday that the survey will cover all the seven crore people in the state. "The survey will help us draft the next state budget and also plan schemes. The purpose of the survey is to eliminate caste discrimination. It should be a model for the country," he added.

On Wednesday, the chief minister conducted a preparatory meeting with officials concerned and directed them to submit a comprehensive report by October-end. "I have already directed them to begin the preparation work, including training," Siddaramaiah said. He insisted that the survey should be conducted without any glitches and there should be no complaints.

He said the Backward Classes Commission approached the government to conduct the survey, which will include the economic status of each individual, whether s/he owns a piece of land and other details. One has to furnish details of his/her sub-caste also in the form. It will be a comprehensive survey, he stated.

The previous survey conducted by the Kantharaju commission had 54 questions and was done manually. The next survey will have more questions and the enumerators will use a mobile phone-based app to collect data. He directed officials to study the Telangana model for the survey.

"We will have a high-powered expert committee to monitor the survey, while another expert committee will frame questionnaire for the survey," he added.

The survey will be conducted by 1.65 lakh enumerators. "Teachers and other government staff will be deputed," he said. **P4**

The survey will help us draft the next state budget and also plan schemes. We will have a high-powered expert committee to monitor the survey — Siddaramaiah, Chief Minister

Chief Minister Siddaramaiah chairs a meeting with representatives of trade forums in Bengaluru on Wednesday

Traders call off strike over GST notices after meeting CM

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
@ Bengaluru

TRADE bodies and street vendor associations on Wednesday decided to withdraw their planned protests against GST notices issued to them after Chief Minister Siddaramaiah assured them of assistance.

In a significant relief, the chief minister announced that past GST dues would be waived off for traders who had not registered earlier but agree to register now.

He stressed on organising workshops in collaboration with trade bodies to clear misconceptions. He reiterated that essential goods, like milk, vegetables, fruits, and meat, are exempt from GST.

While notices may have been issued to traders dealing in these items, no taxes will be collected from them if they fall under the exemption list. However, those who are liable under the GST law must comply accordingly, he told them.

Reassuring the trading community, Siddaramaiah stated that the government's intention is not to harass, but to support legitimate business activity. **CONTINUED ON P4**

ECI

BEGINS PROCESS TO ELECT NEW V-P

Poll panel takes cognisance of the vacancy, starts prep. Formal schedule for the Vice Presidential poll will be announced soon

EXPRESS READ

3 KG Halli-DJ Halli riots accused get 7 years RI

Bengaluru: Marking the first conviction in the 2020 KG Halli-DJ Halli riots case, a special NIA court on Wednesday sentenced three accused to seven years rigorous imprisonment | **P3**

Crucial testing of Samudrayaan a success

Bengaluru: Testing of the personnel sphere of Samudrayaan's Matsya-6000 submersible was successfully carried out at the Vikram Sarabhai Space Centre, ISRO said | **P5**

ED books Myntra, One Sigma for FEMA violation

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
@Bengaluru

THE Directorate of Enforcement (ED), Bengaluru, has filed a complaint against fashion etailer Myntra, and its related entities under the Foreign Exchange Management Act (FEMA), 1999, for allegedly violating foreign investment rules to the tune of Rs 1654,35,08,981 (Rs 1,654.35 crore) under the guise of wholesale trading. The complaint was filed under Section 16(3) of FEMA.

In another case, ED filed a complaint under Section 16(3) of FEMA against Bengaluru-based 'One Sigma Technologies Pvt Ltd' (SIMPL) and its director Nithya Nand Sharma, for contravention to the tune of Rs 913,75,88,062 (Rs 913.75 crore). The company is behind the popular Buy Now Pay Later (SIMPL) app, which allows customers to buy now and pay later in instalments.

In an official release on Wednesday, the ED stated that inquiry into Myntra's books was initiated on the basis of "credible information that Myntra Designs Private Limited (Myntra) and its related companies are doing Multi Brand Retail Trade (MBRT) in the guise of 'Wholesale Cash & Carry', allegedly in violation of the extant Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) policy".

The ED investigation revealed that Myntra had "declared that they were engaged in the business of wholesale cash & carry and invited and received FDI from foreign investors equivalent to Rs 1,654.35 crore, and that they sold a majority of their goods to Vector E-Commerce Pvt Ltd (which sold the goods in retail to the ultimate customer). Vector E-Commerce and Myntra are related parties and belong to the same group or group of companies".

"Vector was created and continued to be used as a corporate entity to bifurcate the B2C (business to customer i.e Myntra to retail customers) transaction into B2B (Myntra to Vector) and then B2C (Vector to retail customers)," the ED added. **CONTINUED ON P5**

CAPITAL CRISIS

Heavy rain causes waterlogging and traffic congestion in New Delhi on Wednesday. The IMD has issued a red alert for South and North East Delhi and an orange alert for North West and South West Delhi | PARVEEN NEGI

DIPLOMATIC COUP

UP police raid Westarctica embassy, arrest 'ambassador'

NAMITA BAJPAI @ Lucknow

IN what may look like a plot straight out of a Bollywood flick, the Special Task Force (STF) of Uttar Pradesh Police busted a fake embassy in Ghaziabad and arrested a man who ran the fake diplomatic mission posing as the ambassador of non-existent countries.

The arrest was made on Tuesday when the STF's Noida unit raided KB 35, Kavingar, where the accused had set up the 'Embassy of Westarctica'.

Westarctica is a self-proclaimed micronation in Antarctica founded by a former US Navy officer. It is not recognised by any government.

"The accused, Harshvardhan Jain, had been operating an illegal diplomatic mission from a rented house in Ghaziabad's Kavi Nagar," additional director general (law & order) Amitabh Yash said on Wednesday.

Luxury cars bearing fake diplomatic number plates in front of the illegal embassy in Kavinagar, Ghaziabad, Uttar Pradesh. Inset: Fake diplomat Harsh Vardhan Jain | ANI

Police said Jain posed as the ambassador of the fictional nations of Westarctica, Saborga, Poulvia, and Lodonia. He moved around in luxury vehicles bearing fake diplomatic number plates and had morphed his photographs with prominent figures, including the Prime Minister and the President to impress and mislead people.

According to officials, Jain engaged in brokering deals by falsely promising job placements for companies and individuals in foreign countries.

"Investigations revealed Jain's past connections with Godman Chandraswami as well as international arms dealer Adnan Khashoggi," Yash said.

In 2011, Jain was found with illegal satellite phones and a case was registered against him at the Kavi Nagar police station, the ADG added.

During the raid, the STF seized over ₹44 lakh in cash and foreign currency of several countries. Besides, four vehicles with diplomatic number plates, 18 diplomatic number plates, 12 diplomatic passports of micronations, forged documents with the seal of the Ministry of External Affairs, two fake PAN cards, 34 seals of various countries and companies, two fake press cards, and documents of various companies were also recovered from the house of the accused.

An FIR has been lodged at Kavi Nagar police station, and further proceedings are underway, the STF said.

Divya creates history, storms into WC final

SWAROOP SWAMINATHAN @ Chennai

DIVYA Deshmukh was so visibly spent she had no energy. When asked to reflect, all she managed was a tired smile. For the previous five hours and change — the second tie of her women's World Cup chess semi-final against Tan Zhongyi — and a 100+ moves, she had gone through the whole gamut of emotions. She was losing. She was winning. She was winning completely. She had missed several chances. Then, at the very end, the former world champion, Zhongyi, had made one too many inaccuracies.

Divya Deshmukh

This time, the 19-year-old, still only an IM, capitalised. By virtue of this win, she has also qualified for the next edition of the women's Candidates in 2026 as well as earning a GM norm. She's one of the youngest players to qualify for the Candidates in decades. Up a few pawns in a rook endgame, she was threatening to queen her b pawn. The engines said she was within 20 moves of checkmate. That's when Zhongyi resigned handing the Indian her biggest victory till date. Even before the Chinese shook hands, Deshmukh, who used to travel to Chennai for classes as a child, was overwhelmed by what was about to happen. Like she had done a few times over the last week in Batumi, a tear or two escaped her eyes.